

MINUTES  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2007  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
TOWN HALL  
7:30 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 7:30 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall. All members were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were also present.

Police Chief McLaughlin introduced newly promoted police officers: Captain J. Peter Hoerr, Lt. James MacIsaac, Lt. Brendan O'Leary, Sgt. Mark Hurley, Sgt. Kim Hurley, and Sgt. Kevin Shea. The Board congratulated the officers on their achievement.

II. QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

There were no questions.

III. ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

Pavement Management Discussion with Resident

Resident Ron Sacca appeared before the Board. The focus of the discussion was on how the Town can ensure that after it reconstructs a road, when the road needs to be patched it is done in the best possible way and to the highest possible standard.

Community Development Director Glenn Clancy explained that the Community Development staff and particularly the resident engineer oversee quality control on road reconstruction. The roads that are planned for reconstruction are submitted to utilities so that they can hopefully do any work necessary before the roadwork begins. However, there are inevitably utility issues that will arise over time that require street openings. Those street openings are overseen by the DPW.

Director of Public Works Peter Castanino acknowledged that the Town needs to be doing a better job with the street opening permit process. He is working on a revised by-law to cover this matter as well as revised standards for street patching. Although he originally believed that current staffing levels would be sufficient to do this work, Mr. Castanino now feels that the Town needs a dedicated part-time street opening/pavement inspector who will check trenches every day and follow up with utilities. This will be included in the FY09 DPW budget.

Mr. Sacca underscored the point that the Town needs to be vigilant about the quality of patching work. He pointed out that Billerica has a reputation for being very exacting with its standards for roads and that Belmont should have a similar reputation. We are averaging about 300 street openings per year for 70 miles of streets, or about 4.3 openings per mile. He asked why we have to wait to hire someone to have these patches being inspected - we should start tomorrow.

The Board expressed its confidence in Mr. Clancy and Mr. Castanino to ensure that the necessary standards will be achieved.

There was a brief discussion of the problem of stone bounds that have disappeared due to the impact of road work. Community Development has a plan in place to address this issue.

Use of Harvard Lawn Fire Station Sale Revenue

The single proponent who has bid to purchase the Harvard Lawn Fire Station, Andrew Magdanz, appeared before the Board. The Fire Station Committee has recommended that the proposal be accepted. The plan is to reconstruct the building as a single-family home as a residence for the proponent, with the façade preserved. The plan calls for a green building with possible use of solar and geothermal technology. The Board stated it is very pleased with the proposal and the bid price of \$615,000.

The Board moved: To accept the proposal and award the bid to the proponent for \$615,000.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

There was discussion of the use of the revenue from the sale. By law the money must be used for capital projects. The Selectmen had promised to use the proceeds to fund the new fire stations. Because the fire station bonds cannot be called early, to adhere to that promise to the greatest extent possible, it has been proposed to use the money to pay the debt service and reduce the tax levy by a commensurate amount. Alternatively, the money could be used to support another capital project. The Warrant Committee and the Town's financial team will explain the pros and cons of these proposals and make a recommendation.

#### Cardboard Recycling

Chair Mary Tinkham and members of the Recycling Committee appeared along with Mr. Castanino. The Committee proposes to expand the level of recycling that is being done in the Town to formally include cardboard, which would be picked up as part of the regular curbside recycling program. In order to do this, the contract with the Town's hauler has to be modified and the Town will pay an additional amount; however, the Town would normally pay an additional amount anyway for the final years of the contract.

The Board indicated it is inclined to approve this but requested some benchmarking figures and unit cost analysis in order to better understand the economics of the proposal.

The Board moved: To authorize Mr. Castanino to sign a renegotiated recycling contract extending it for two years without having to come back to the Board, and assuming that this occurs, to change the recycling regulations in conformance with the proposal.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

#### V. ACTION BY WRITING

##### Alcohol License Renewals

Chair Andy Levin of the Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Committee appeared before the Board. The Board reviewed all the restaurant and retail liquor licenses which are up for renewal. Mr. Levin indicated that in each case any outstanding licensing issues have been resolved.

It was noted that the Selectmen's Office keeps track of inquiries from businesses interested in liquor licenses in case a license should become available.

The Board moved: To grant the license renewals.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

#### III. ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

##### DHCD New 40B Regulations Discussion

The Board noted that Belmont and other communities have been unhappy with the current environment under the state's Chapter 40B affordable housing law. The Massachusetts Coalition for Affordable Housing (MCAH) has asked for Belmont's support in expressing concern over the new proposed regulations. Additionally, the Massachusetts Municipal Association feels that there are many more flaws in the new regulations than there are benefits for communities. The main concern is that Chapter 40B benefits developers at the expense of communities and the changes further reduce the power of local communities in favor of the state which further benefits the developers.

The Board agreed to support the MCAH's statement.

#### Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger and Town Accountant Barbara Hagg presented an overview of the Town Administrator's FY09 recommended budget. The recommendation is for a level services budget and reflects savings from health insurance changes. Overall, the FY09 budget reflects a 3.7% increase over FY08. The only additional items are a new part time street opening inspector, new shelving for the Town Clerk's office, document imaging for historic records, EMS reporting software for the fire department (required by federal mandate), and a shift of a part-time Council On Aging position to grant funding. Together these changes add \$89,200 which is only a 0.2% increase above absolute level services.

The Town Administrator's wish list includes \$50,000 for development of a Master Plan for the Town; \$20,000 for increased hours for public nursing; \$11,500 for website enhancements including online billing, citizen request tracking, and online hosting of town committee meeting video recordings; and \$20,000 for desktop virtualization software to reduce PC setup time by 5 hours per machine (200 hours per year).

Changes on the revenue side include a new growth estimate of \$600,000, a decrease in PILOT payments from McLean due to sold property, recommended use of \$800,000 in free cash for the operating budget, a decrease in state reimbursement for the Chenery Middle School, an estimated increase in local aid of 15%, and reduced earnings on investments by \$200,000.

The budget books will be printed and distributed before Christmas.

Mr. Younger reported that Belmont has won an award for its planning of the Oakley 40R project. The Town is also receiving a \$2800 grant from DEP for our recycling program, and the police have received to date \$21,000 in private donations for defibrillators which would otherwise have to be submitted as part of the capital budget. The Police Station Feasibility Committee will update the Board on its work at the Board's January 7 meeting.

Mr. Conti reported that the Community Preservation Act Study Committee has begun meeting, but one of the appointed members is unable to serve. The Committee requested that the vacancy not be filled and the Committee continue its work with 8 members. The Board agreed.

Mr. Conti reported that the annual holiday party for employees is being overseen by the Building Services staff this year and will be held on Wednesday, December 19.

Mr. Conti announced that subject to the Board's approval, he has reached an agreement with Lisa Gibalerio to begin taking the regular Selectmen's meeting minutes on a trial basis beginning December 17. Ms. Gibalerio currently takes the minutes for the Warrant Committee and would be paid at the same rate. Mr. Conti will continue to take the minutes during executive sessions. The Board agreed.

#### VI. OTHER

The Belmont Center Planning Group has prepared a Department of Housing and Community Development grant proposal for their downtown improvement plan which the Town will submit.

The Board asked that the Anti-Defamation League be formally notified of the Town's withdrawal from the No Place For Hate program.

The Board will meet with Dr. Alper to discuss a board or committee to oversee the proposed teen center.

Chairman Firenze has received his colleagues' submissions for the Town Administrator's performance review and a public review will be held at an upcoming meeting. The discussion will focus on the areas of board support, communication and planning, as the areas where improvement is desired.

The Board moved: To enter into executive session to discuss potential litigation, litigation, and value of real property and subsequently not to return to open session.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0). The Board entered executive session at 9:49 PM.

(During executive session, no substantive motions were made. The Board adjourned at 10:19 PM.)

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Thomas G. Younger, Town Administrator